

In re: Appln No. 09/707,685
Amendment dated May 2, 2003
Reply to Office action of January 2, 2003

Atty Docket: 6006-015

Remarks

Applicants have amended Claims 14 and 29 to further clarify that the substrate is cylindrical and made of metal and that the exterior surface of the metal substrate is also a metal exterior surface. Claims 14 and 29 have further been amended to clarify that the stent-forming metal is deposited onto the metal exterior surface of the metal substrate, and that the stent is defined in the deposited metal on the exterior surface of the cylindrical substrate.

I. Applicant's Information Disclosure Statement Filed April 14, 2002 was timely filed and was complete at the time of filing and must be considered by the Examiner

In the Final Office Action mailed January 2, 2003, the Examiner indicated that only pages 1-11 of the 25 pages of the Information Disclosure Statement filed April 14, 2002 were received. During a telephone conference with the Examiner on January 8, 2003, the Examiner searched the Office records and learned that the entire Information Disclosure Statement was, indeed, received by the Office, but that due to its volume, was separated by the Office into two boxes with pages 1-11 being placed with one box of references and pages 12-25 being placed with a second box of references.

As the Information Disclosure Statement was timely filed pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.97, and has been confirmed by the Examiner to be complete, Applicant submits that it is incumbent on the Examiner to consider all of the cited references filed in the Information Disclosure Statement of April 14, 2002 in the course of further examination of this application.

II. The rejection of Claims 14-21, 23, 29-30 and 33-38 under 35 U.S.C. 102 over either Clubb (U.S. Patent No. 6,203,732) is moot in view of the amendments presented herein and should be withdrawn.

Anticipation under 35 U.S.C. §102 requires that "each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." *Verdegaal Bros., Inc. v. Union Oil Co.*, 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 USPQ 2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir.

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1987). *In re Robertson*, 49 USPQ2d 1949 (Fed. Cir. 1999). The rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) in view of Clubb, et al. is improper because the reference fails to disclose each element of the claims and, therefore, fails to anticipate the claimed invention.

In connection with claims 14-21, 23, 29-30 and 33-38, Clubb, et al is cited as allegedly disclosing a method of manufacturing a stent comprising providing a substrate having a continuously curved exterior surface, vacuum depositing a metal onto the substrate, forming a plurality of interconnected structural elements and removing the substrate. With regard to Claims 35-38 the Examiner has erroneously cited Clubb as disclosing "control of heterogeneities and by controlling the type of material used during deposition, properties such as grain size, phase, material composition, binding sites, strength, etc. are inherently controlled," referring to Col. 5, lines 10-25.

Applicant has amended base claims 14 and 29 to patentably distinguish over Clubb, et al. Specifically, the pending claims now require that the substrate have a metal exterior surface onto which the stent-forming metal is deposited. As acknowledged by the Examiner, Clubb, et al teaches employing a photoresist layer 16 on the exterior surface of the substrate. The photoresist layer 16 is then etched to define a series of depressions within the substrate surface that define the stent pattern. In Clubb, et al. the stent-forming metal is then deposited by vacuum deposition onto the patterned substrate (See Fig. 14), then the undesired deposited metal 20 is machined away (Fig. 16 and Col. 4, lines 44-53), to leave the deposited metal filling the pattern of depressions in the substrate.

In sharp contrast to the method of Clubb, et al., the presently claimed method provides an unpatterned, cylindrical metal substrate having a metal exterior surface. In the present invention there is no patterning of the substrate, and, hence, the need for the photoresist coating 16 of Clubb, et al is eliminated. In the presently claimed invention, the stent-forming metal is deposited directly onto the metal exterior surface. In further contrast to Clubb, et al, the step of forming the stent pattern is a step that is separate from that of depositing the stent-forming metal. In Clubb, et al, the stent pattern is formed during the deposition process, rather than as a separate method step. Thus, in Clubb, et al. the stent pattern is actually defined prior to the deposition step by etching the photoresist and the underlying regions of the substrate, yet the actual stent

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structural members are inherently defined during the deposition of the stent-forming metal, not as a step separate from the depositing step.

Finally, with regard to Claims 35-38, the Examiner relies upon the teaching of Clubb, et al at Col. 5, lines 10-25. A careful reading of this disclosure, however, fails to reveal that Clubb, et al makes any type of teaching that the deposition process may be controlled to control heterogeneities in the stent material as claimed in the present application. At most, Clubb, et al suggests that by varying the depth of the depressed pattern in the substrate, the resulting thickness of the stent structural members may be varied, that the stent material may "tantalum, niobium, zirconium, titanium or platinum vapor applied on a stainless steel mandrel", and that a radiopaque layer may be vacuum deposited between two layers of other materials. Clubb, et al however makes no explicit teaching of how to control these factors during the practicing of the method, nor does Clubb, et al teach that that these factors are heterogeneities or that there is any motivation to control them in any manner whatsoever.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the present claims traverse the rejection under §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Clubb, et al.

III. The rejection of Claims 14, 17-20 and 22-23 under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Roth (U.S. Patent No. 6,069,175) is inapplicable to the amended claims and should be withdrawn.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has again incorrectly relied upon Roth as disclosing all the elements under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) of independent claim 14 or of dependent claims 17-20 and 22-23. The amended claim 14 presented herein requires that the substrate be an unpatterned, cylindrical metal substrate and that the stent forming metal is deposited onto a metal exterior surface of the cylindrical metal substrate. Roth is inappropriate as a §102(e) anticipatory reference because, first, the apparatus disclosed in Roth is referred to as "rolled sheet stents" (emphasis added). Roth, col. 3, line 16. A "rolled sheet stent" is a stent that is formed so that "when rolled and released, it resiliently unrolls and expands to . . ." Roth, col. 4, lines 30-34. This description is of a rolled sheet that increases diameter by simply unraveling or reducing the amount of overlap of the sheet. Roth, therefore, cannot teach employing a

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cylindrical substrate and depositing a stent-forming metal onto a cylindrical substrate. Rather, to fabricate the device of Roth, a planar substrate is required, with subsequent rolling of the deposited film into a generally cylindrical coil.

Moreover, in all of the embodiments disclosed in Roth, there is a release layer interposed between the substrate and the deposited stent forming metal. (See, Figs. 4-7). Thus, the stent-forming metal is not deposited onto a metal exterior surface of the substrate as required in the pending claims. Moreover, like Clubb, et al. the patterning of the stent structural elements occurs in Roth during and as an inherent part of the deposition process, rather than as a separate method step as presently claimed in the present invention. Like Clubb, et al. Roth teaches the use of a photoresist deposited onto the deposited metal film, the photoresist is etched to impart a pattern through the photoresist layer, then the stent-forming metal is deposited onto the release layer overlying the substrate through the pattern through the photoresist layer. In this manner, the pattern of stent structural members is formed during the deposition and not as claimed in the present invention.

Applicant submits, that the presently pending claims traverse the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Roth.

IV. The rejection of Claims 14, 17-19, 21-22, 29-30 and 34-38 under 35 U.S.C. 102 over Reed, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,197,013) is inapplicable to the amended claims and should be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 14, 17-19, 21-22, 29-30 and 34-38 under section 102(e) over Reed et al. should be withdrawn because it fails to disclose all the elements of the presently claimed invention. Since Reed et al. fails to disclose every element it cannot anticipate the present invention

Specifically, with regard to the presently amended pending claims, Reed, et al fail to disclose an unpatterned, cylindrical metal substrate having a metal exterior surface, and depositing a stent-forming metal onto the metal exterior surface of the unpatterned cylindrical substrate, then defining the stent's structural elements in the deposited stent-forming metal.

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Rather, Reed, et al teach fabricating a cylindrical mandrel of silicon having a pattern silicon probes projecting from an exterior surface thereof, then coating the exterior surface of the cylindrical mandrel with a sacrificial layer of SiO₂, then depositing a conformal layer of metal. The stent lattice pattern may be made either by EDM or by selective deposition, presumably using a patterned photoresist and depositing the stent-forming metal through the photoresist onto the patterned sacrificial layer covering the silicon substrate. (See, e.g., Col. 10, line 62 to Col 11, line 5).

In any reading of Reed, et al., it fails to disclose employing an unpatterned cylindrical metal mandrel having a metal exterior surface, depositing the stent-forming metal onto the metal exterior surface, then defining the pattern of the stent structural elements in the deposited stent metal, and then removing the substrate from the deposited and formed stent, as presently claimed.

With particular regard to the rejection of Claims 34-38 as being anticipated by Reed, et al., the Examiner cites to Col. 11, lines 39-52. Like Clubb, et al, however, this section of the Reed, et al disclosure merely teaches that other materials may be used, such as polyimides or biodegradable polymers may be used as carriers for the drugs to be delivered. This disclosure is wholly devoid of any teaching or suggestion that the heterogeneities in the stent material, itself, may be modulated in any controlled manner as claimed in the present application.

Based on all of the foregoing arguments, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejections based on the cited art.

V. The rejection of Claims 31-32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) in view of Clubb, et al. in view of Roth is traversed by the amended claims and should be withdrawn.

The Examiner acknowledges that Clubb fails to disclose vacuum depositing nickel-titanium alloy, but that Roth teaches deposition of nickel-titanium alloy. This rejection, however, ignores the elements of the base claim 29, the rejections of which are addressed above. Applicant is claiming that deposition of nickel-titanium by the claimed method is both novel and non-obvious. The Examiner's obviousness rejection is *prima facie* inappropriate as it fails to

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address the elements of the base claim and any intervening claims, and, should, therefore be withdrawn.

VI. The Provisional Rejection of Claims 14-23 for Obviousness-Type Double Patenting Over Claims 1-8 and 9-26 of Copending Application No. 09/745,304 is not ripe.

Applicants note the provisional rejection and, upon indication of allowable subject matter, will substantively address this provisional rejection.

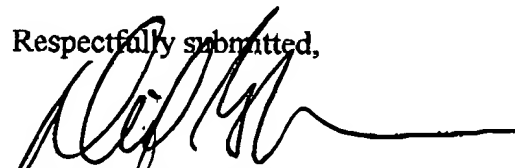
Summary

Applicants respectfully submit that the cited references fail to anticipate or render obvious the present invention and submit that pending claims, as amended, are allowable over the art cited and that of record

This Response is being concurrently filed with a Request for Continued Examination and is timely filed as it is being filed along with a one-month extension and appropriate fees.

Should the Examiner require any further information or wish to discuss any aspect of this Response, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



David G. Rosenbaum
Reg. No. 31,872

May 2, 2003

ROSENBAUM & ASSOCIATES, P.C.
875 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 3600
Chicago, IL 60611
Tel. 312-397-0303
Fax. 312-397-0301
E-mail: drosenbaum@biopatentlaw.com